

congregation or the community. It wasn't easy. It took sacrifice; but, with determination, they stuck to their plan, lived within their means, and—in less than 3 years—made the final payment on their bank note.

During the time they were eliminating the debt, the church gave over a half a million dollars to local ministries, charities, and world missions. In less than 36 months, this relatively small congregation took on a mountain: a mountain of debt. At the end of last week's service, after hearing a sermon about moving mountains, the congregation celebrated as they burned their bank note.

Today, I congratulate Pastor Joe McKaig and the congregation of Oakland Heights Baptist Church for achieving this significant goal and for being an example of fiscal responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, if a church with a modest congregation in an average community can pay off an overwhelming debt, I believe the most powerful and influential Nation on the Earth should be able to pay off its overwhelming debt; but, just as with this church, it starts with a vision, followed by a plan and a determination to achieve the goal.

Mr. Speaker, I have a vision, a vision of a debt-free America. With a goal, a sound fiscal plan that includes living within our means while providing the constitutional services of our government, we can achieve a debt-free Nation.

We owe it to our children to 1 day, 1 day soon, write the final check to our creditors and burn America's bank note to the world.

FILL UP YOUR PLATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, in 2013, I participated in my first "Monte's March" to raise money for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. Along with my friend local radio host Monte Bel Monte and several others, we walked 26 miles in 1 day, from Northampton to Greenfield, Massachusetts.

Along the way, we stopped at the Amherst Survival Center where low-income people can go to receive food, clothing, medical advice, and a number of other services to help them through hard times.

The executive director handed me a stack of paper plates. On the plates, people who used the Amherst Survival Center had written how hunger had impacted their lives.

Inspired by this simple yet powerful message, last Thursday, I launched #fillupyourplate on my Web site at mcgovern.house.gov. It is a place where people can tell me what SNAP, or food stamps, means to them or how hunger has impacted their lives. Responses are posted on my Web site to create a wall of virtual paper plates.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House Agriculture Committee, which I am proud to serve on, held the first hearing in its top-to-bottom review of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

SNAP is the Nation's preeminent antihunger program that provides critical food assistance to more than 46 million Americans. Last year, 16 million children—or 1 in 5 American children—relied on SNAP. Unfortunately, every indication is that Republicans will try to cut this critical safety net program yet again.

Mr. Speaker, I fully support rigorous oversight of Federal programs, but we shouldn't single SNAP out for aggressive or unnecessary scrutiny. It already has one of the lowest error rates among all Federal programs, and CBO projections show that SNAP caseloads and spending are expected to fall as our economy continues to improve.

One of the reasons why I started the #fillupyourplate campaign was to make sure that the voices of those who use SNAP, who are struggling to make ends meet, are heard in the discussions here in Washington. All too often, the real stories of those who are struggling get drowned out by false rhetoric and partisan talking points.

Mr. Speaker, so far, I have received more than 100 virtual paper plates. I want to read just a few of the messages.

From Michelle, she wrote: "SNAP means that many junior ranking members' families will not go hungry while their military spouses are away defending this Nation."

From Patricia: "I am a single mother of two. I currently work at Dunkin' Donuts. If my SNAP benefits got cut, I would not be able to pay my rent because I would be spending all of my paychecks on food for my children. I lived in a homeless shelter for a year before coming to my apartment in October of 2014.

"If my SNAP benefits are cut, I will be back in a shelter. I do not plan on being on SNAP benefits forever. I would like to finish my degree and get a job that will support my household without any assistance, but for now, I need help."

From Cherise: "It means my children won't go to bed hungry and can function better in school because they have food in their bellies. It also lets me buy more healthy and fresh foods I wouldn't have access to if I had to pay out of pocket. I am grateful for this program. There is no joy in watching children struggle over something so easily prevented."

From Sabine: "SNAP to my family means I don't have to choose between paying the lights or making sure I feed my son breakfast in the morning. Having my SNAP benefits takes a huge load off my \$243 take-home check from work a week. With SNAP, my son is guaranteed food in his tummy."

From David: "It meant my family was still able to eat while I was be-

tween jobs. My wife had to quit her job to stay home and take care of our special-needs daughter. A month after the birth of our second daughter, I lost my job and went almost a year before finding a job that paid enough to provide for our family.

"At one time, I was holding four part-time jobs at the same time. I never thought I would have to rely on government assistance but, now, don't know how we would have gotten by without it."

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Mr. Speaker, I am committed to making sure the voices of those who rely on SNAP are heard in the conversation here in Washington, and I am committed to end hunger now.

I would remind my colleagues that those who are on SNAP are real people who have real families. They are facing difficult times that they hope will soon pass. Rather than cutting their food benefit or making them jump through more hoops, as some in this Chamber have advocated, we ought to support them. Too often, the focus of this Congress is on ways to help the well-off become even more well-off, but we must not forget those who are struggling. They are our constituents. They are our neighbors. They are our brothers and sisters.

I encourage people to visit my Web site, www.mcgovern.house.gov, to share what SNAP means to them.

IN HONOR OF JOHN EDWARD BUSH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Black History Month, I rise in honor of an Arkansas son, John Edward Bush, whose entrepreneurial spirit and history of service to his community continue to inspire us to this day.

John Edward Bush was born into slavery on November 14, 1856, orphaned at the age of 7, and freed from slavery at the end of the Civil War. When he had no permanent home or means to support himself, he worked odd jobs until, one day, he was taken to Capital Hill City School in Little Rock and forced to attend. He became a dedicated student, working as a brick molder to pay for his education. In 1876, he graduated with honors from Capital Hill City School in Little Rock, where he then served as principal for 2 years.

Mr. Bush served as the chairman of the Republican Party in Arkansas, but he is best known in Arkansas as the co-founder of the Mosaic Templars of America in 1883.

Together with Chester Keatts, Mr. Bush began the Mosaic Templars to aid African Americans who were being refused insurance coverage for illness, death, and funeral costs by White insurers. The efforts of Mr. Bush and Mr. Keatts, in service to their community, brought economic security and advancement to a group that had been